


NO FUTURE NOTES

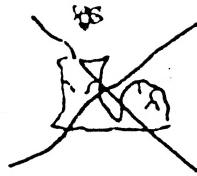
THE WORK/ENERGY-
CRISIS AND THE
ANTI-NUCLEAR
MOVEMENT



BY THE

MIDNIGHT NOTES COLLECTIVE

I. An antinuclear summer?

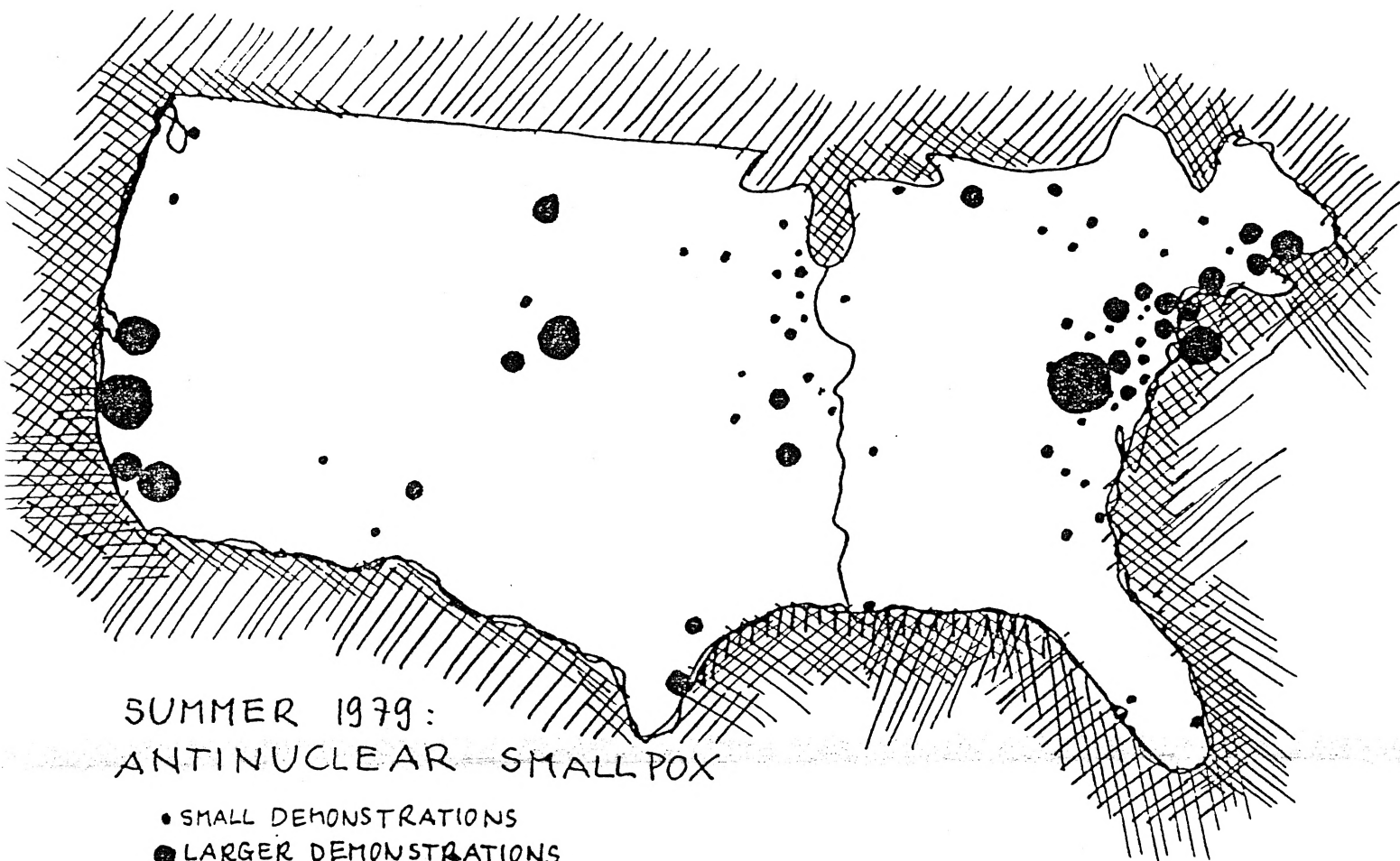


From the point of view of the development of the antinuclear movement, the Three Mile Island accident was well timed and extremely beneficial. This is not to say, that the antinuclear movement would have disappeared without it or that the accident changed it radically. But the unexpected proof of one of the main arguments of the movement - i.e. that nuclear reactors are dangerous - helped expanding it both in numbers and in its regional distribution.

A superficial check of the materials available to us shows that approximately 300'000 persons took part in antinuclear demonstrations, rallies, picketings, alternative fairs etc. since March 28, including the 100'000 who attended the national rally in Washington D.C. on May 6. There were at least 80 antinuclear mass-events since Three Mile Island, among them 8 major demonstrations with more than 10'000 participants.

More important, perhaps, than the increased numbers of people involved was a wider regional distribution of the movement. It expanded from its former strongholds in New England (Seabrook), California (Diablo Canyon) and Colorado (Rocky Flats) into the Midwest (especially Illinois) and even the South (demonstrations were reported in Atlanta, Georgia, Miami and St. Petersburg, Florida, Bay City and Glen Rose, Texas) (1) There were also small rallies in Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Arizona, New Mexico. New in the history of the antinuclear movement were also large demonstrations in cities like New York, Boston, San Francisco etc., which signaled an expansion of the activities from rural or suburban areas into the metropolitan concentrations.





SUMMER 1979:
ANTINUCLEAR SMALL POX

- SMALL DEMONSTRATIONS
- LARGER DEMONSTRATIONS

But the most important question for us is whether this quantitative expansion of the movement has also affected its qualitative aspects, i.e. the type of people involved, its organization, tactics, or more generally its class-composition. For, as impressive the numbers might seem at a first glance, they do not indicate any kind of an "historical break-through" like the anti-war, civil-rights or student-movements of the sixties which were able to mobilize millions. Even the Washington rally was in fact a "deception" for many militants. Considering the demonstrations in which we participated personally and the reports we got from friends on others, we conclude, that the class-composition of the antinuclear movement as it socially manifested itself has not significantly changed

in this summer. By this, we mean, that mainly white intellectual workers (more or less involved in alternative ways of production or life style), including students, made up for the bulk of the participants. This is confirmed by the regional distribution which shows centers of educational industries (university-towns) as its organisational bases. What happened after Three Mile Island was merely that this type of people got mobilized also in minor educational centers, without changing the class-composition. (2)

It was typical, that an antinuclear march near Detroit (at Monroe, June 2nd), which drew several thousand participants, consisted almost exclusively of white students. It's class-basis was only the considerable university-industry in that city, but not the important automobile-industry and its mainly black work-force. And this happened in a city which was, during the Enrico-Fermi-reactor accident of May 5 1966 "almost lost", with all its workers, students, races and qualifications.

This general statement of a superficially stable class-composition of the movement must, however, be modified in some minor, but important aspects. A first modification occurred, of course, in Pennsylvania itself, where the movement not only expanded in numbers on its old class-basis, but also, in several demonstrations (in Harrisburg, Lancaster, York on April 8, Reading on May 20 etc.) included mainly "local residents", i.e. clerical and state bureaucracy-workers, which make up a large part of that population.

The same type of people appeared also marginally in other demonstrations outside of Pennsylvania. This first modification is


7

easily explained by the direct impact and health hazards of the accident itself (which, of course, can not be considered as an "organisational model" for the movement as a whole). The material interests of these people are obvious, also concerning the possible decay of property-values (even surveys showing so far no decline - but the accident is not yet over).

Another important "marginal" change were "local kids" who intervened (or tried to intervene) in some demonstrations with unplanned and unpredicted actions, like storming and pulling down a gate during the Shoreham-demonstration of June 6, without any consecutive effort to get arrested by the police. The official leaders of the movement had than, of course, to take their distances from such actions, which hurt the non-violent image of the movement (but also, we must add, the image of invulnerability of the nuclear reactor sites). These class-impurities put the "auxiliary police forces" of the movement to sometimes hard tests.

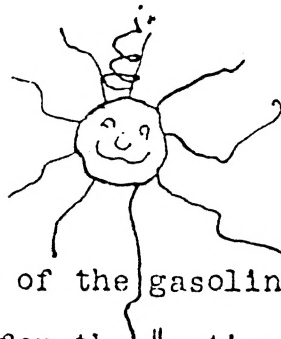
Other "local kids" were simply disappointed by the symbolic and ritualistic tactics of the movement. After the Indian Point rites of August 5, I heard a group of such "kids" talk to each other on the way back from the ConEd gate (where the Civil Disobedience-arrests were still going on) : "They are not serious", one said and tried to flush away his deception with a can of beer. Is resignation the price of "non-violence"?

The counterattack with higher gasoline prices contributed to the preservation of the old class-composition of the movement. This is indicated by a growing gap between those who, in polls, are



against nuclear energy and those, who are, additionally, for the closing of all nuclear plants. The fear of capital's "revenge" with price-hikes was stronger than the fear of radiation-dangers and created a paralysing schizophrenic attitude: if you are in a cage together with a lion, you don't tease him without, at least, a chair in your hands.

II. A pro-solar summer?



But the almost 100% price-hike of the gasoline (over a year) was on the other side not as bad for the "antinuclear" movement as it might seem. This is why the "antinuclear" movement, which has always been very concerned about the "energy-crisis" in general, never came out with any type of action against this ferocious attack on the working-class income and mobility. While the concerns of more and more people shifted away from Harrisburg to their own gas tanks, the "antinukers" continued their old civil-disobedience rites at nuclear plant fences, diminishing in numbers and enthusiasm.

But meanwhile, a "new optimism" grew within the movement: for the more expensive petroleum and nuclear energy became in this summer, alternative energy sources became "cheaper". (3) The pro-solar wing of the "antinuclear" movement grew more optimistic while its antinuclear component felt a little bit "left alone" and went on biting its own tail. A shift from apocalyptic anti-nuke to optimistic pro-solar (or pro-alternative-energy-development) was visible in the "antinuclear" movement long before this summer: alternative



energy fairs began to replace anti-nuclear rallies already last year and a large part of the antinuclear militants, especially "informal" leaders, were stressing more the solar options than the antinuclear fights. Some of them are also involved in the alternative energy business which is booming especially in New England.

(L)


The rise of the petroleum prices and electricity-rates has dramatically accelerated the pro-solar/alternative development, as is illustrated by the following statement:

"Earlier this year, when I was preparing my paper for this meeting," an expert on fuel cells said, "I made my calculations assuming that the price of diesel fuel would rise to 62 cents a gallon by 1985.

It has already reached that level, so the proposals in my paper have become economically attractive practically overnight." (NYT, 3/10/79, report on the 14th Intersociety Energy Conversion Engineering Conference in Boston)

With diesel fuel being 90 cents (or more) by now, we are not living in 1979, but somewhere in the early nineties - as far as energy-profitability thresholds are concerned. The price-hikes of this summer have brought about a jump of a decade or so in the profitability of alternative energy-sources - and profitability is still the real planning instrument of capitalism. Higher energy prices are not just another rip-off, another attack on our income to raise the oil-companies' profits, they express a choice, an ultimately conscious choice made by capital in the planning of our future.

It is a choice that will be tested out exactly in the current recession, which, not by coincidence, is the third "accident" of



this summer. This choice creates an intense division between those, who have, financially or politically, invested in alternative energy and those (the majority) who don't have the means or the will to do so. While the pro-solar "antinuclear" movement can only be happy about the petroleum-price-hikes, most other working-class households experience it as a harsh attack on their income and are unable to see the "positive aspects".

Why this attack and why now? First, it has to be stressed, that this crisis is by no means an energy-crisis. In a certain sense there was never and will never be a true energy-crisis, because, by the first law of thermodynamics, there is always a constant amount of energy. What capital faces (and wants us to work and pay for) is in fact not an energy-, but a work-crisis, a crisis of the transformation of natural and human energy into social energy, into surplus value and profits. (5)

The current work-crisis goes back to the early seventies when capital tried to reverse the drop of social productivity caused by the welfare struggles of the sixties (which resulted in a kind of "wages for housework" for a lot of people, especially women) by pushing people back into the waged labor-force and thus getting back more work for its money than from the (collapsing)households. Scores of women obviously accepted that deal, hassled by tougher welfare-procedures and tired of the continuous insecurity and struggles. But consequently they showed not much more enthusiasm for work in the expanding service-sector, where they mainly were employed than in their households before. Additionally the level of reproduction of their husbands and children



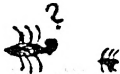
(as future workers), of their lovers or brothers was damaged. Capital tried to counteract these effects by a reorganisation of the work-day, introducing more part-time jobs, allowing more time for self-reproduction (like jogging, yoga, meditation etc.), re-defining the role of the men, modelling the work-day on the pattern of housework (several small jobs, high mobility, mixture of work and "recreation"). Waged work was generally expanded, but wages and work-time dropped, as well as productivity. Even the counterattack with inflation did not incite workers to work more. Instead of working more intensively, they preferred to look for an additional little job or have two wage-earners in the household. An expanded wage-fund combined with lower productivity means profit-crisis for capital. The broadly based inflation eroded the command-function of money, clearly visible in the expansion of consumer-debts. The response to this situation was the petroleum-price-hike, a "specific" inflation which was to produce a capil-

lary profit-drain from low-productivity-businesses and working-class-income to the centers of highly productive, capital-intensive industries (among them not only petroleum, but also nuclear, computer and chemical). With these profits, capital should then be able to make the next "jump". This solution, however, had its own economic and political dangers : petroleum-inflation reduced working-class consumption (e.g. car-sales), but was ineffective against the stubborn work-crisis. On the other end, isolated intensive-capital-production proved to be highly vulnerable and politically risky. (5)



The current recession is the laboratory where a capitalist solution for this dead-locked profit-situation is to be found. Capital is exploring the mysteries of the work-crisis by means of deep cuts into the social factory. Obviously capital is risking serious disruptions of the process of material production and reproduction, a certain level of destruction of its own assets (among them labor-power) and of its own political personnel (Carter). One surprising finding of this social surgery could be the alternative energy-production and life-style as a capitalist option.

III. Is small profitable?



The choice of the alternative life-style and way of production (appropriate technology, buddhist economy) was an attack against the capitalist policy of the early seventies to push people out of their households in the offices, stores or factories, to become more productive. The retreat to the countryside (which in fact is nothing else than a big, natural household, with trees, mountains etc. as furniture) or to low-level consumption and "tinkerer"-production was a response of a sector of the working class (mainly intellectual workers in a broader sense) which contributed during all this period to the capitalist work-crisis. But on the other side, this political and (more and more) also technical creativity of the working class can be transformed from an instrument of attack into a condition of defeat, i.e. into the possibility of a "new mode of production" for capital itself. (This is just one




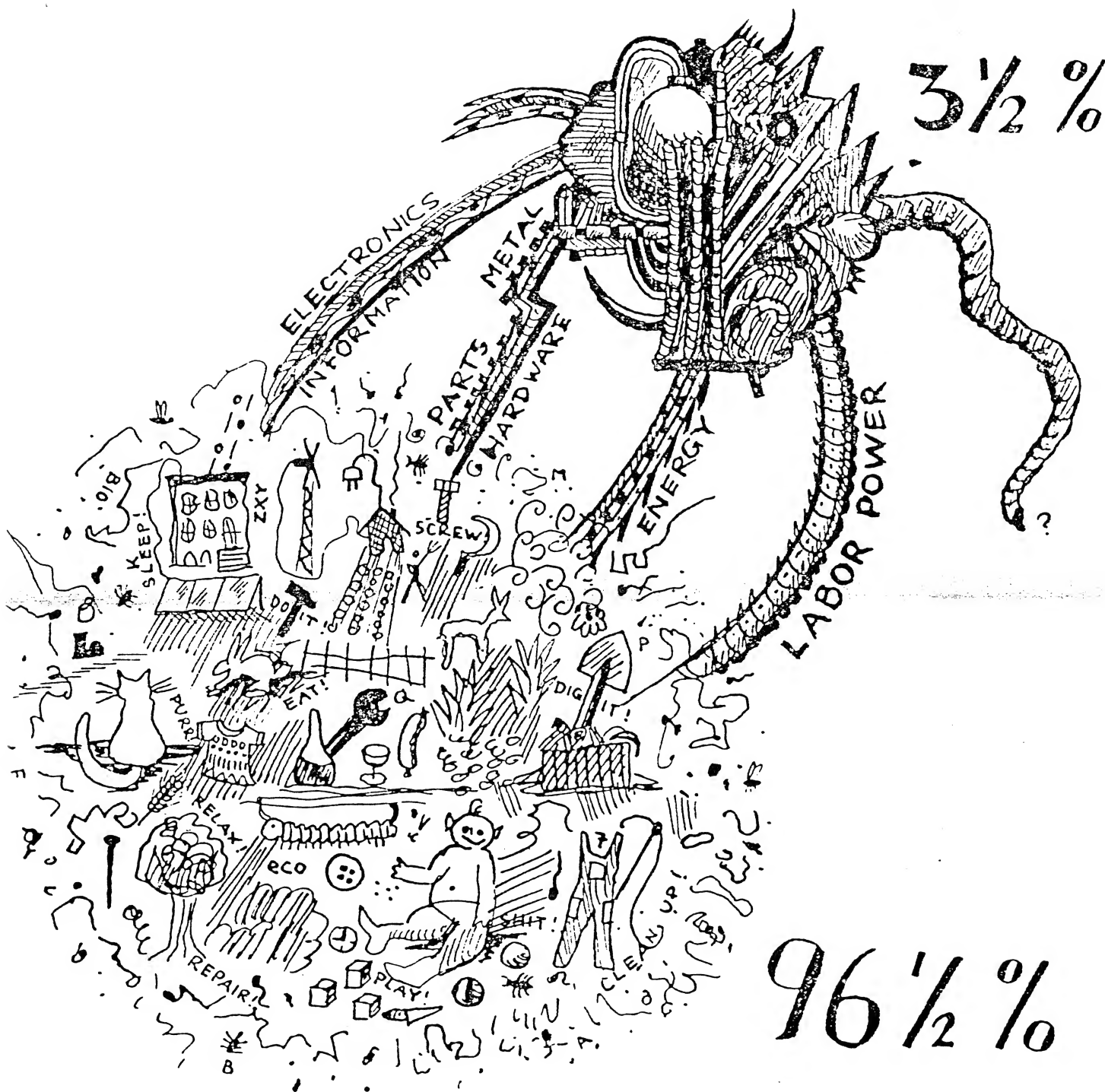
example more for the basic logic of capitalist development, which has always been sustained by the antagonistic creativity of working class-struggle : as the 8-hour-day-struggle, the struggle for pensions etc.)

The alternativists have always stressed their interest in new ways of working, in human work and micro-productivity in the household, or small, autonomous communities. Already Schumacher in his famous book "Small Is Beautiful" discovered in 1973 the unexplored resources of our work-day : only $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ of our "total social time" is actually used for material production in a developed capitalist society. Then, he concludes: "Imagine we set ourselves a goal in the opposite direction - to increase it sixfold, to about twenty percent, so that twenty per cent of total social time would be used for actually producing things, employing hands and brains and, naturally, excellent tools! An incredible thought! Even children would be allowed to make themselves useful, even old people. (...) Think of the therapeutic value of real work; think of its educational value."^a(7) There is no doubt, that Schumacher and the

alternativists in general are sincerely interested in the good of mankind and are not mere apologists of capitalism. But their interest in real work happens to be also the main interest and problem of capital at this moment. Capital is struggling against "unreal" work, unprofitable and unproductive work, and is on its way to destroy it : the lay-offs of this fall will show that.

Also capital wants to have a closer look at the immediate work-process and the structure of the work-day, after the obvious failures of previous explorations (Fordism, Taylorism, income-incentives, part-time work etc.).





3½ %

96½ %


The energy-price-hikes make "human energy" and other alternative energy- and work-sources more profitable : a messenger on a bicycle is now even more profitable than before. "Man" becomes competitive again - therefor also child-labor, grand-pa-labor.

The decentralized, ecological, self-managed, self-disciplined, "yogic" (8) and appropriate-technology-work is now a viable option for capital. But this does not mean, that capital is willing or able to abandon the "old" $3\frac{1}{2}$ % -social-time-sector and that it is going to give up its command over the whole social factory. Its option is rather a combination of a modified "old" sector with a disciplined "new" alternative area. (9) The capital-intensive industrial sector will be connected by various "umbilical cords" ^{the} with work-intensive sector and suck out its profits. Also for capital, such a proposal was until now a daring, an incredible thought! For the "productivity" of this alternative sector will certainly be lower as that of the old sector, when measured merely by output per capita. But on the other side, the reproductive productivity will be very high, although difficult to measure (the "therapeutical and educational value" of the new work, as Schumacher puts it). The work-day or work-life could be reorganized between these two poles of social production. The exhausted labor-force of the intensive $3\frac{1}{2}$ % -sector could be recycled in the alternative "complementary paradise" and then re-enter intensive exploitation for another cycle. This would be the main source of profits extracted from the alternative sector. For capital, it could mean savings in social expenditures, welfare, health care etc. for all these services would be done "for free" by unpaid alternative labor. The alternative to such a solution would any way only consist in mass-unemployment or "faked" employment in service jobs like in the seventies and would infect the productivity of the rest of the workers.

If the profit-transfer is secured, low-level-productivity is still preferable to no productivity or counter-productivity, even in "developped" countries.

Jonestown, the fourth "major accident" in recent US-history, was nothing else than a model of this new mode of production. Otherwise unproductive or unemployed people (mainly black welfare-people) were put to work, not only for their reproduction but also for external profits, and their "wages" were used for capital investments in the alternative sector. This experiment failed, mainly because of the inability of the "command-personnel" (Jim Jones and consorts) to deal with the highly explosive internal dynamics of "voluntary", alienated work. His people began in fact to refuse the 24-hour-work-day and that could only mean the break-down of Jim Jones' complete control over them. Refusal of work, refusal to love work, ended also the "love-affair" with Jim Jones. In such a situation, death was preferable. What else can you do with a labor-force which ~~even~~ even refuses "alternative work"?

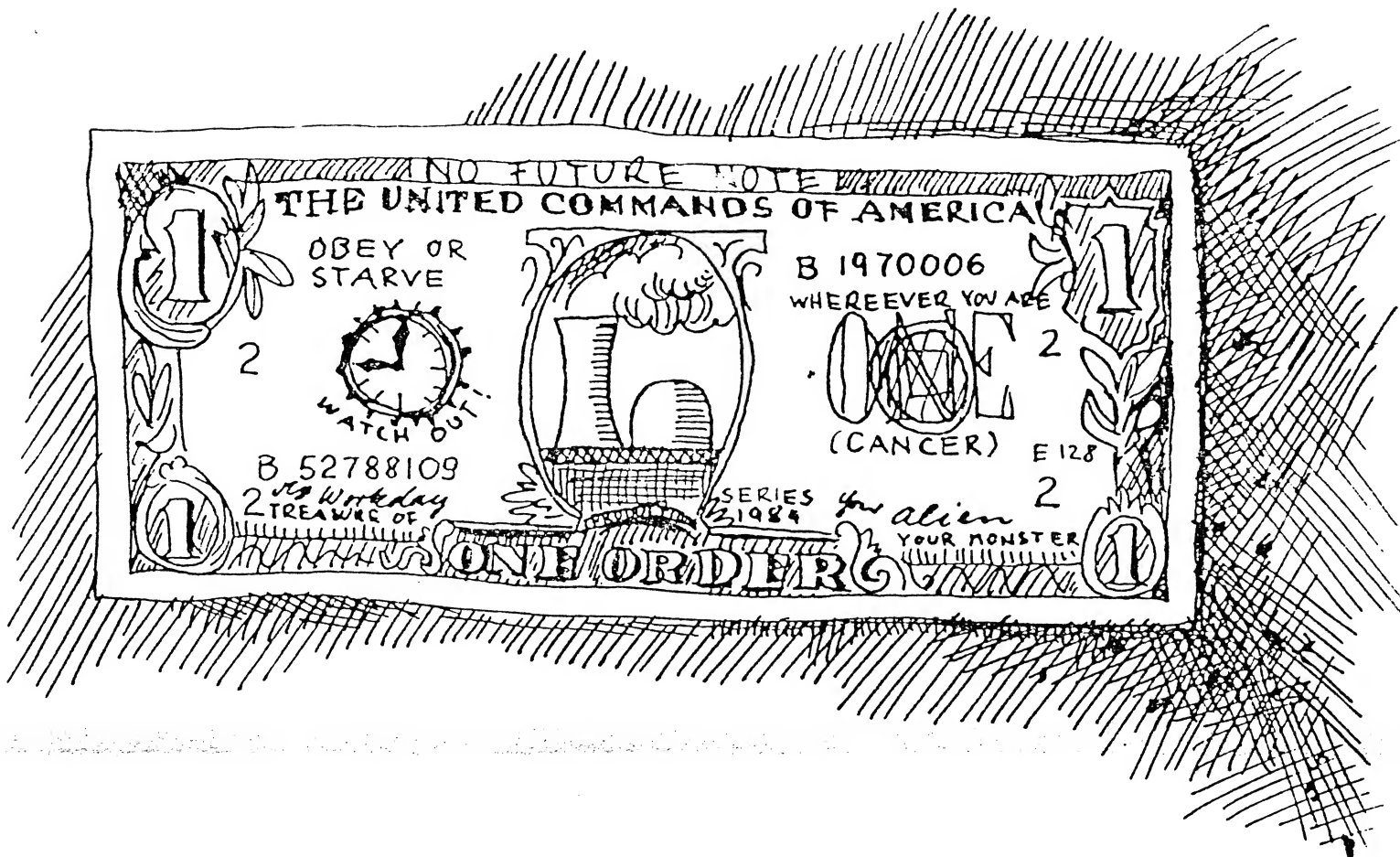
WHAT???

Following a more balanced and less isolated "Jonestown"-model the alternative option could mean that energy and other commodities (also food) which had previously been produced in the $3\frac{1}{2}$ %-sector would be produced by our unpaid housework and that we would have to invest our external wages as capital in our household-economy. For example, we would have to pay for our solar collectors and bio-mass-devices and additionally have to take care of their maintenance. The establishment of this expanded household-sector (which could also exist on a neigh- )

borhood or community-level) creates a tremendous new market for "3½ % -industrial products" (solar collectors, sheet metal, storage batteries, electrical appliances, all types of hardware, electronical equipment etc.) and so secures another profit-transfer-"umbilical-cord", a source of profits. A relationship of unequal exchange, comparable to that between developed and underdeveloped countries, would be established. Capitalism, after all, has always been a combination of development and underdevelopment and cannot exist in an other way.

The difference between those two complementary sectors is not, that has to be stressed, the choice of the technology. There will also be a solar industry in the 3½ %-sector, e.g. huge

solar collectors in Arizona or ugly shale-oil-mining, or biomass -gas-plants. Capital is more and more interested in this use of "alternative" technologies, but this has nothing to do with the establishment of ^aparallel "soft path". Not only Big Alternative is acceptable for capital, but also small alternative. Decentralisation of things, e.g. self-made solar collector on the roof versus giant collectors in deserts or nukes versus wind-mills, does not automatically imply decentralisation of command over our life, as many alternativists hope. If this was true, capital would never have admitted the individual car as a means of very "decentralized" transportation and would have favoured railroads which are much more centralized and easier to control (a central headquarter could determine the schedules, the location of stations usw.). Capitalist command is far more sophisticated and is essentially not command over things, but control



over circuits, movements, connections and exchange (mainly done by money, with fiscal policies, but also electronics; and by police or other "physical" interventions only in case of breakdowns). Material decentralisation and destruction of capitalist command are not the same thing.


The shift from antinuclear to pro-solar within the antinuclear movement,

, the emergence of more and more "antiplanning" (10) and less and less "obstruction" in relation to capital are an expression of an underlying capitalist option. It's revealing that these antiplanners, though they base their confidence on the technical creativity of the working class-tinkerer, have no confidence

in the political creativity of the class, i.e. are continuously concerned about what could happen "afterwards" and are afraid of so-called chaos or anarchy. (This is also visible in their police-tactics in demonstrations and in the fact, that some of them now stab in the back ~~the~~ the direct-action-people, who are ready to rely more on the political creativity of the movement.) Capitalism is depicted as a mere self-destructive, suicidal monster and they propose to organize an alternative "where capital has left". But while focussing on the oldest and politically already harmless sectors of capital, they cannot see, that capital never "leaves" and that they are only in competition with more-capital-intensive paths of development (nuclear, Big Solar etc.) which in reality will go together with "soft paths", unless capital and all its "possible alternatives" are definitively blocked and the monster is blown out in space from our spaceship Earth.


Footnotes

1) The antinuclear movement had expanded in new regions even before Three Mile Island to a minor degree. The last year saw small demonstrations in Louisiana and on the eve of TMI, there was the first demonstration in Mississippi (Coleman St. Park, March 24) which drew 200 people.

2) How this class-composition developed historically and what it signifies for the organizational and ideological character of the movement ~~we~~ ^{we have} attempted to analyse in Midnight Notes, "Strange Victories: The Antinuclear Movement in the US" 

and Europe."

3) This relative cheapness doesn't mean that solar will be more ^{not} expensive than any other energy before. It requires further-more initial investments that poorer people will not be able to afford. The cheapness pays off only after a long period of operation which has to be anticipated financially.

4) cf. Hands-On, A Guidebook to Appropriate Technology in Massachusetts, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 1978.

5) Even on the level of presently available energy-sources, there is no real shortage: petroleum can last for decades, coal for hundreds of years.

6) cf. Midnight Notes, Strange Victories, Bad Surprises, on safety-problems.

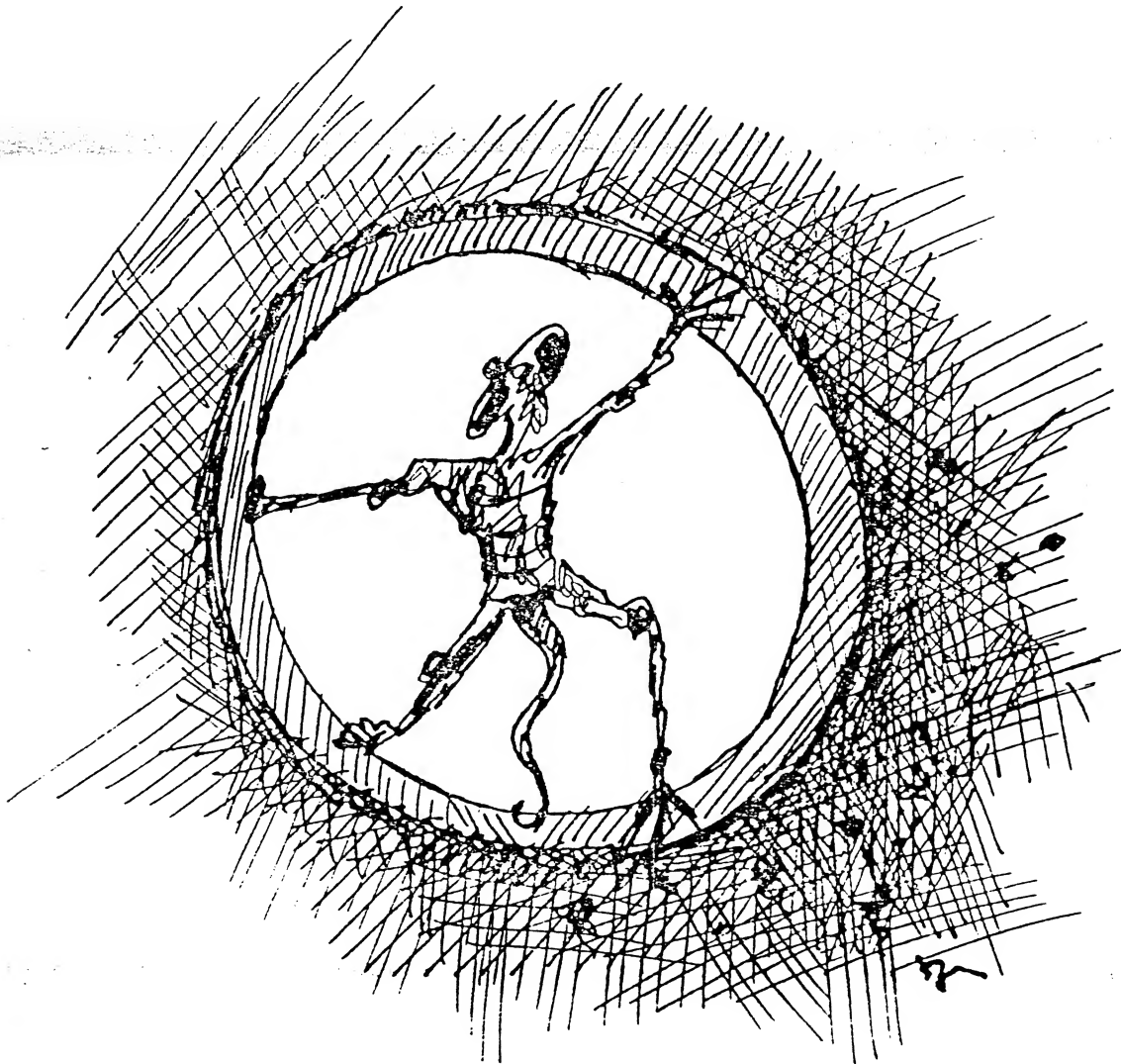
7) Small Is Beautiful, Harper & Row, 1973, p. 151/152

8) cf. the "eight aids to the achievement of the goal of yoga are listed as: (1) abstinence from injury, falsehood, theft, incontinence, and the acceptance of gifts; (2) cleanliness, contentment, self-castigation, study, and devotion to the Ishvara; (3) stable and easy posture, accompanied by the relaxation of effort, or by a state of balance; (4) restraint of breath; (5) withdrawal of the senses; (6) not allowing the mind-stuff to wander; (7) focusing the mind-stuff, or contemplation; (8) concentration, wherein the object of contemplation is transcended and duality destroyed." (Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, I. 2. 1-8, trans. by James Haughton Woods

Harvard Oriental Series, XVII (Cambridge: Harvard Uni-
versity Press, 1914) quoted in: Bierman/Gould, Philosophy for a
New Generation, Macmillan, New York, 1970, John Koller, Selfdisci-
pline and Yoga, p. 487.

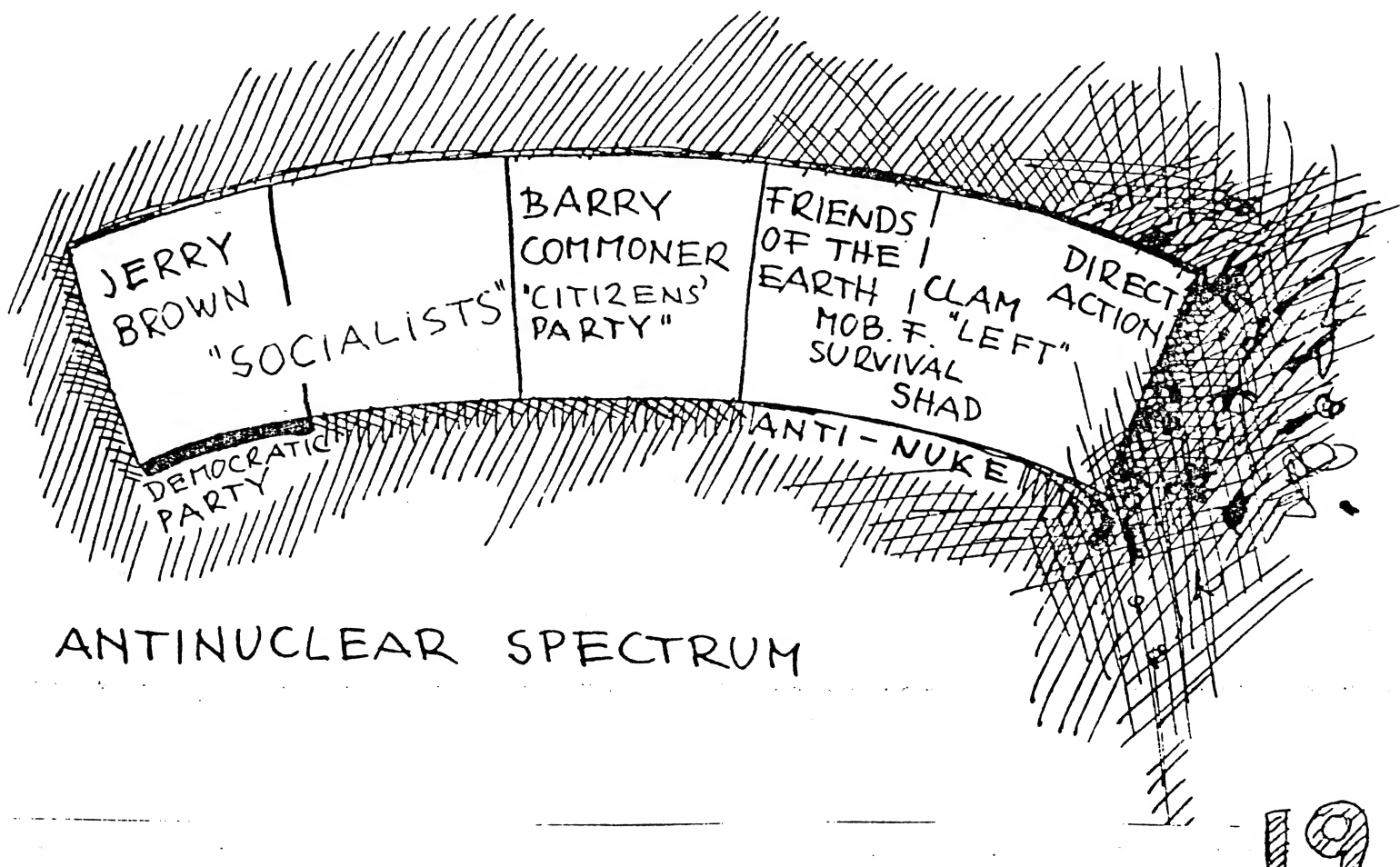
9) Already Schumacher is for a "mixed economy", for a coexistence
of different levels of productivity.

10) cf Midnight Notes, "Strange Victories", on the "Selfdefinition of
the Movement" and the "antiplan"-problem.



I V. Who can do it?

With its numerical and regional expansion the antinuclear movement has increasingly become the theatre of a struggle around the question: who will provide the polit/economical personnel capable of managing the alternative sector and the "new mode of production" as a whole? Who will be able to domesticate the alternative area, which is still an ambiguous and explosive mixture? Who will function as "social control rods" that would guarantee an orderly combustion of the new human work? Who has the experience and the political credibility? Time has come for a completely new type of polit/economical personnel, for "soft" social engineers.



Some of these command problems are presently being rehearsed in the antinuclear movement. In large measure it appears as a spectrum of choices ranging from Jerry Brown's Presidential Bid, to the Citizen's Party of Barry Commoner, the legalistic Friends of the Earth, the "old" antinuclear types pushing consciousness-raising, the re-initiators of the Clamshell tactics of ritualistic fence climbing (SHAD etc.) and the "extremists" of the Coalition for Direct Action. The future of the movement appears as a "choice" between these tendencies, which can be looked at as various political approaches to the "new mode of production". Though, at times, they take themselves as mutually exclusive, there is a constant shifting among their personnel, for they all

find their material interests forwarded by the increase of energy prices. (For example, there has been no serious attempt on the political horizon stretching from the electoralists to the direct actionists to even rhetorically combat the energy price hike.)

The various demonstrations of the summer were supposed to demonstrate the mobilizing capacities of the different tendencies and were explicitly meant not to accomplish anything substantial against the nuclear industry or even the plants. There was no need to push a development which was already being accelerated through the price hikes by capital itself. In this situation fence-climbing and the star-shaped die-ins a la Jonestown left the civil-disobedience-tendency in the awkward position of l'art pour l'art. With the state closing down plants, the utilities and the banks refusing to




finance the nukes, and the business press filled with solar optimism, what was the need for jumping fences into the arms of the bemused police? The main effect of these disguised political power-games was the growing deception and disaffection of the sincerely antinuclear militants and a certain erosion even among the ranks of the most disciplined non-violence-activists.

By the end of the summer the crisis of the movement is more than visible. It expresses itself in the decadence of the commitment to non-violence, consensus-decisionmaking and affinity-groups. This process is exemplified most starkly by the SHAD-alliance in New York which attempted to follow as rigidly as possible the precedent of the Clamshell. But after its almost Racinian demonstration at Shoreham (June 6), it was forced to "compromise" its consensus-procedure and go along with a $\frac{3}{4}$ -majority-rule in the preparations for the Indian Point demonstration of August 5. Following on the consensus degradation, SHAD accepted the heresy of affinity groups being formed right at the demonstration, with little or zero non-violence training. As all non-violence cards have been played and "strange victories" are being won elsewhere, the old social activist part of the political personnel is becoming increasingly nervous and feels cheated by the legalist tendency which is beginning to harvest the electoral fruits of their own labour. Who needs militants experienced in crowd-control when the crowds disappear by themselves?

Thus, the direct actionists have to prove that the movement can still "get out of hand" and that they are needed for the future management of the alternative area. They have to act quickly,




before capital may do the job by itself with its price policy, or the legalists may establish themselves too firmly. This situation is partly responsible for the sudden "extremism" displayed by the Coalition for Direct Action at Seabrook in its organisation of the Oct. 6 occupation. The ante is dramatically upped by the disavowal of absolute non-violence and the call for the use of "tools" such as ladders, shovels and wire cutters. The aim of the demonstration lies no longer in the "symbolic value" of the numbers arrested, but in its "effectiveness in directly blocking further construction" (cf. Handbook for Oct.6). All the previous ingredients of a tight crowd-control have been reduced. The participants will have a choice of 35 assembly points before the planned occupation and are free to take the type of action they want. Moreover, the size of the affinity-groups has been reduced to 5-10 (instead of 15-20 as before), which allows for quick decisions and unpredictable behaviour. All this indicates that the organizers have to make large concessions in order to win back the antinuclear militants who have been "abused" during the summer. And there is at least the possibility that something could happen, especially if large contingents of urban blacks or "local kids" were to take advantage of this occasion to show their interest in social disruption (see our description of the Levittown-riots below). The October 6 occupation as a final battle is an attractive bet also for scores of "old" militants who cannot afford to wait for an alternative future. It has the attractiveness of a reversed Minas Tirith, where all free nations of Middle-earth join their forces to beat the Black Lord before the long winter begins. But they should not forget that some unknown nuclear worker is still on his way to Mount Doom with the Ring.



At the same time the organizers keep the cards in their hands. First, the model of the occupation (Marckolsheim and, more particularly, Whyl) involved only planned reactor sites and not almost finished plants like Seabrook. The marginal tolerance of the nuclear industry and the state will be much lower than in any previous occasion while the support of local residents is by far less impressive than in the German model case. Indeed, one of the organizers told us that "just anything that happens is a victory". It is as if they knew they are going to fail, and this very knowledge will be the main element of control over the demonstrators. Conceived as an "effective" antinuclear action, the demonstration has only a very slim chance. However, for the first time in the american antinuclear movement a space is opened to the political creativity of various types of people. The organizers are going to take a risk - why should other people not take a chance?

The lateness of the planned occupation (nights in New Hampshire get cold in October) indicates another source of anxiety for the direct actionists. The connection with the first primary of the 1980 Presidential election in NH, only four months after the demonstration, is more than obvious. The occupation date seems to be a compromise between climate and electoral politics: continuous with the antinuclear summer, cool enough to make it short, and close enough to the spring to have an impact on the primary. If the direct actionists cannot display strength and control in October they will be completely washed up in the melting snow of early March. For the electoralists present a very powerful argument: the price hikes have established the material feasibility of alternative production; consequently the point is not to push



capital, but to institutionalize this production. What better way to institutionalize it except through elections? A lot of "older" social activists in the movement have already made this choice. They are now afraid that an "ugly" outcome for the October 6 action could damage their electoral positions, spoil the party and delay this institutionalization process. That's why even Anna Gyorgy, Harvey Wasserman, Sam Lovejoy and others, although officially "endorsing" the demonstration, are in fact going around and stabbing in the back the direct actionists. (Our hope is, that everybody's party gets spoiled!)

The clearest example of the new electoralist tendency is the Citizen's Party (a "Third Party" against the Democrats and Republicans). Barry Commoner is its mentor and likely candidate, while its organizational units (beside some "socialist" elements from the Democratic Party and some unions) are the "grass-roots" organizations of the '70s. These locally based, issue-oriented or constituency-focused groups expanded during the 1973-74 crisis involving themselves in "bottom line" economic issues, ranging from taxes to utility rates. But the present energy squeeze, and recession price hikes, are putting this movement into crisis. They are facing the futility of single-issue-campaigns, which fail to build a wider social power. At the same time, their bases in the community and the neighborhoods makes them the natural allies of the alternativists. This is what Barry Commoner represents. He speaks for a "new rationality", i.e. an alternative, decentralized but supremely efficient production and reproduction. Although his anti-capitalism is very much of the Second International

24

variety, he does not opt for the archaic nationalization of large industries, but finds in the home and the community the basic mode of production. The ideology of alternatives meets with "neighborhood-power" in the Citizen's Party, whose very name indicates its acceptance of the most abstract form of capitalist work: voting.

As for Jerry Brown, he represents the future interaction between the alternative sector and the $3\frac{1}{2}$ %-sector (Big Business). Cutting social expenditures, implementing unpaid alternative services and using the money instead for productive investments (also in the alternative energy sector, in mass-transportation etc.) is his program. It makes perfect sense for capital and is not just an expression of demagogical opportunism, as many of his critics argue. Jerry Brown's weakness is probably his lack of a grass-root basis. But Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda are working on this with their Campaign for Economic Democracy.

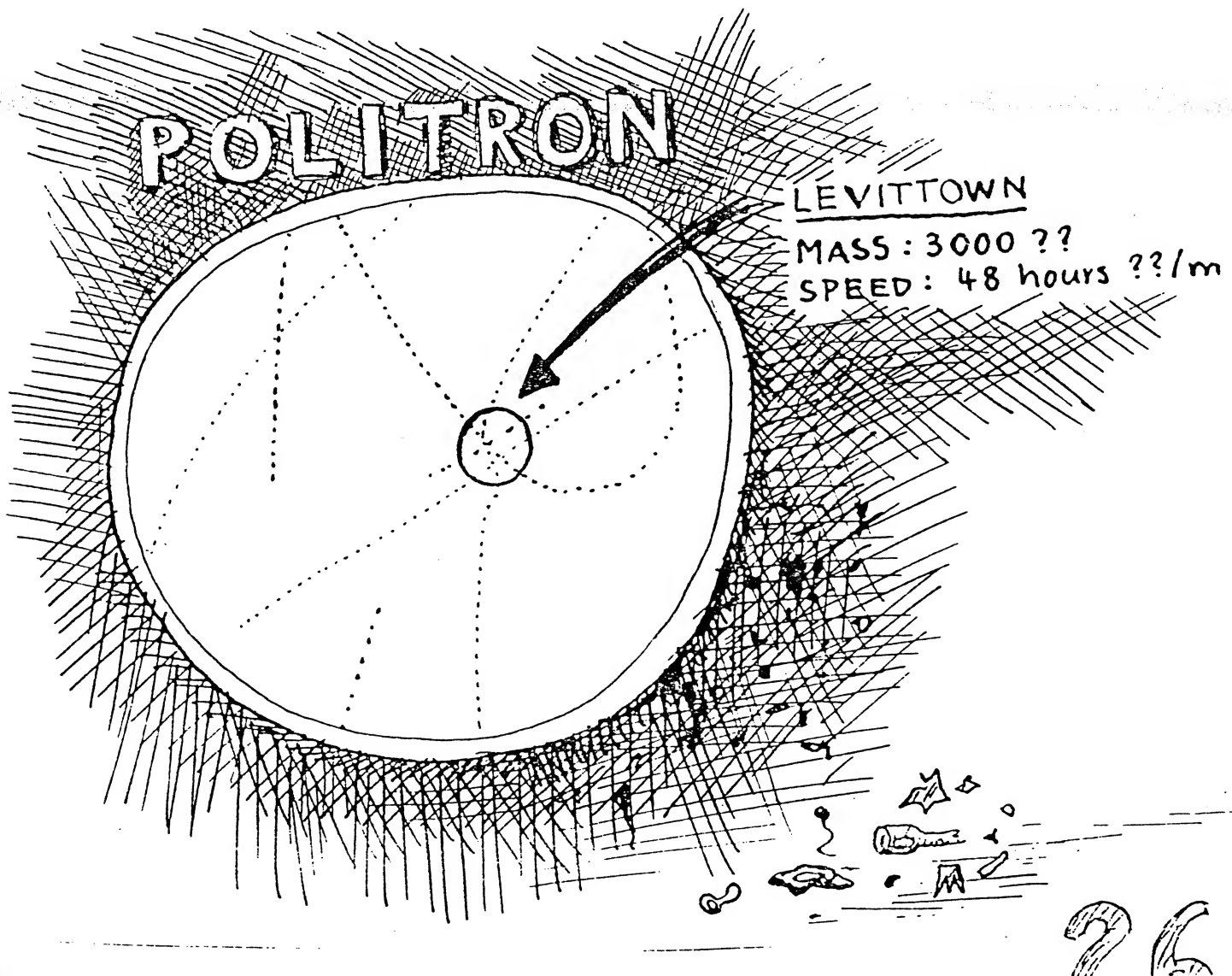
Power in the antinuclear movement (which went from the legalistic Friends of the Earth to the activist mass movement, as e.g. the Clamshell) seems to be shifting back from the direct actionists to the electoral sphere. Only an unexpected turn could reverse this tendency which undoubtedly represents an immediate defeat.

V. Who won't do it ?

The enemies of the activist proposal are two: one apparent, the other real. The activists take as their enemy capital-

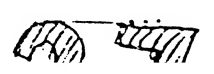


intensive, centralized industry (which they at times identify with "capitalism"). But this "enemy" is now more concerned with hiding his sympathy for the alternative mode of production than attacking the alternativists. (In this context, Jerry Brown is already a very "compromising" figure for capital.) There is, however, a more immediate enemy: the movement against the energy price hikes. This movement got its most concrete social expression in the independent truckers' strike and the "gas" riots of Le-vittown, Pennsylvania. (June 23/24). This movement is a "diffused" movement, almost subliminal, completely distinct from the "Newtonian" anti-nuke movement which is obsessed with getting



the exact number of participants at a demo (e.g. at the Indian Point rally of Aug. 5, people ^{were} stamped not to be double-counted by the organizers, so anxious were they to give accurate accounts of mass, space and time). Another "Newtonian" aspect is the use of buses (with sharp schedules) to ship home demonstrators exactly at the point when "interesting things" begin to happen. The anti-price-movement appears to be ruled by a kind of "Heisenberg"-principle of class struggle : when you look at the mass, you don't see the movement; when you look at the movement, you can't see the masses. While its action seems swift and involves only relatively few people (e.g. Levittown involved at most 2,000 to 3,000 at its peak, though nobody was counting) it obviously has a large working class potential. This movement, that is against the price hike, thinks the gas shortage is a "hoax", but presents no plans, appears to both capital-intensive industry and the alternativists as purely negative and even "reactionary". Further, it is of necessity violent since only the "dangerous types" can have an effect on a target like oil prices, which appear unassailable by the usual methods of protest and subversion.

One important fact that must be stressed is that the price hike had no predetermined limit (in Europe, gasoline prices are now between \$2.50 and \$3), for all prices, especially oil and energy prices, are determined by the class struggle. There was no necessity for the price of gasoline to settle at about \$1 at the beginning of July. As Marx pointed out, the prices of commodities are determined not by the value (socially necessary labor time) crystalized in the commodity, but by the ratio of capital to labor



absorbed in its production. When there is a lot of capital compared to labor in a commodity then its price is higher than its value, while if a commodity is labor-intensive its price is lower than its value. (This principle underlies the unequal exchange between developed and underdeveloped countries.) This is especially true of gasoline which is produced with very little labor, because there is very little labor to exploit in a refinery, e.g.

Where, then, are the profits of the oil industry coming from? From the discrepancy between the gasoline price and its value. It is surplus appropriated socially, from the totality of exploitation induced in all the other areas of production and reproduction. Hence, the subtleness of the exploitation and the difficulty of confronting it directly.

The struggle that has most helped determine the price was the truckers' strike and the Levittown riots. Neither attacked the oil companies directly; rather, they were directed at the social and political circuits upon which the surplus of the energy corporations depend. Both the strike and the riot threatened the functioning of the exploitative mechanism which determines the value of capital and, therefore, the price of oil.

In one sense the truckers strike was a classic struggle: it began with wild-cat disruptions, grew to a point where the union officials had to take on the strike, then it got out of control, turned into a riot followed by a "compromise" settlement and the return to work. But though the details are familiar, the shape is quite different.

In late May and early June sporadic reports of blockades at truck-stops began. For example, on June 3 there was a blockade at a truck-stop in Oklahoma City. Then followed reports of sniper fire throughout the Midwest, from Rapid City (South Dakota) to Lolo Hot Springs, Montana and Sioux City, Iowa. As the heat built up the Independent Truckers Association (ITA) was forced to formally back the strike on June 12. But the formal backing by the ITA neither halted the shooting nor the unannounced blockades of gas-stops, diesel-depots and highways all around the country. June 22-24 was the climax of the strike. Carter's first concession was followed by gunfire in Louisiana, Minnesota, Tennessee and Illinois. The scene was set for ^{the} Levittown "white riot", at the cross-section of the gas-powered, suburban-based proletariat. It was a meeting of truckers and kids going through the "cold turkey" that exploded and it was the decisive point of the oil price hike curve in the U.S.

The site of the riot, Five Points Intersection, is the natural spatial spot of this ignition, for it is literally the auto-highway-heart of the suburbs! A meeting place of five roads, at each of the vertices three gas stations, a tire shop and a produce market in front of a diner. Around it is Levittown, the first planned working class suburb of the post-WWII period, all neat and deceptive in the now relaxed grass plots and shade trees. On June 23 the truckers helped spark a confrontation between young guys hanging out or cruising and the gas station owners. They were blockading the produce market on the other end of the intersection and when one of the station owners tried to shut down "for lack



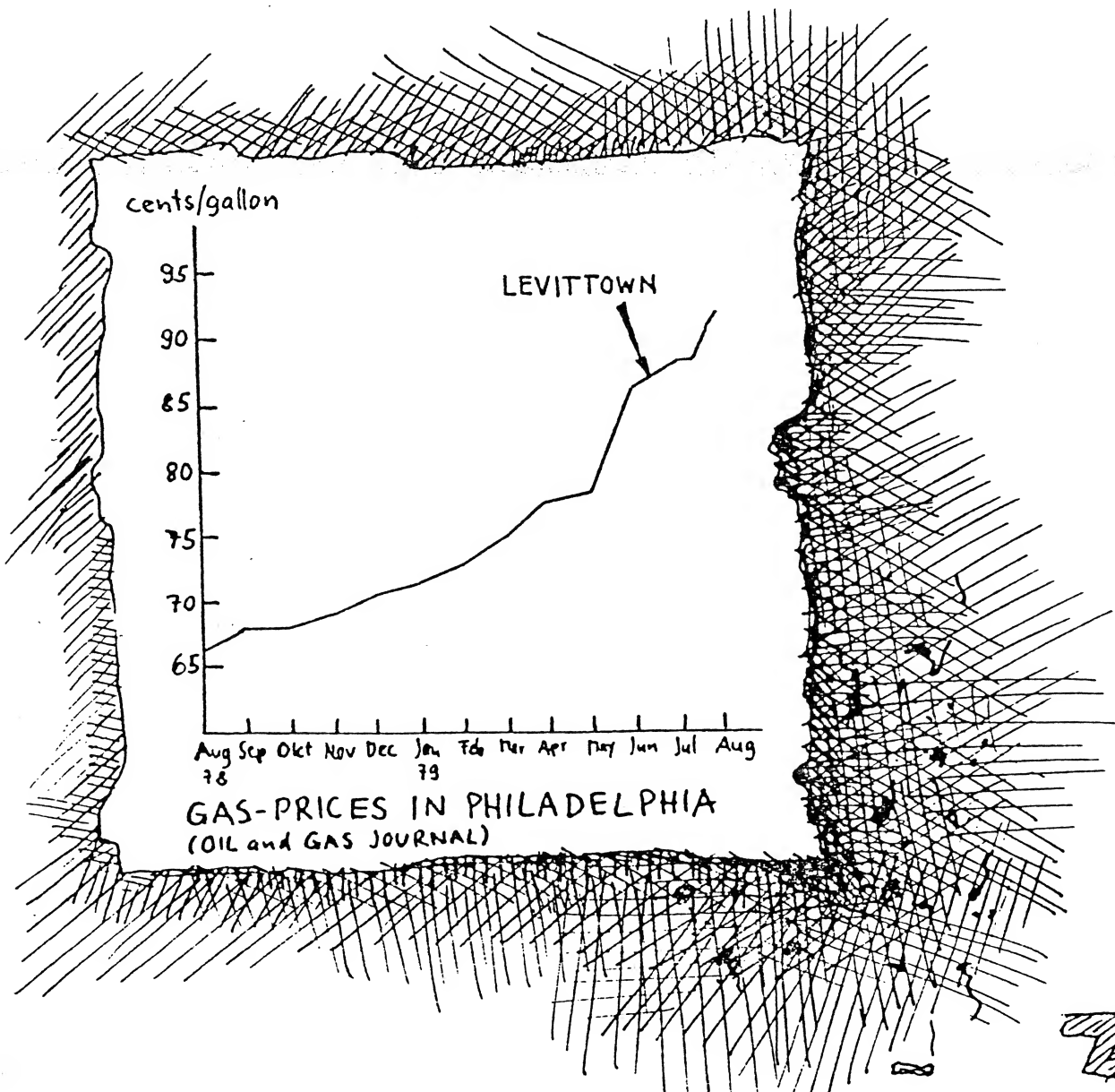
of gas", tires began burning, rocks were thrown and cars wrecked in the middle of the intersection. When the police arrived they were met with sticks and the fire men were met with bottles. The local cops were completely overwhelmed by their own "citizens" and had to call in reinforcements from all over the area as well as the state police. After arrests and battle, things quieted down only to be met the next afternoon by a neighborhood crowd milling at the intersection. An old sofa is put up in flames, a junk car is dumped in the intersection by an unidentified tow truck and the battle explodes again. "Firecrackers, including powerful M-80s, boomed and sparked throughout the night." At the height of it Bucks County Sheriff, John Mitchell, said: "There is a complete breakdown of law and order in Lower Bucks, all police powers are exhausted" and asked for "partial martial law". As Mitchell continued: "(The first night) was well planned... they (the truckers) are very well organized, probably better organized than we are," while the second night was "spontaneous"; but either way the police was definitely spooked. They had a "police riot" of their own, beating up "innocent bystanders", roughing up the arrested and chasing the "protesters" in "a guerilla type warfare into the residential areas surrounding the intersection." They continued their jumpiness into the next day when they arrested a local woman for "assaulting a police officer" after she threw iced tea and ice cubes at him. Their "own people" were striking back at them and they didn't know whom to trust.

After the riot the truckers strike began to taper off. (al-

though June 26 saw a blockade snarling up 30 miles of traffic



in the Long Island Expressway) even though the official demands of the strike were far from met. For example, the elimination of the 55 mph speed limit was never negotiated, while the fuel pass along and the uniform weight standards were postponed. However, the essential demands of the strike - more diesel and stabilization (if not roll back) of the prices - began to be met in a ghostly fashion. By the last weekend of June and the first of July the gas situation began "improving"- the alien threat of shortages disappeared as quickly as it struck.



Though the strike and the riot could be looked upon as the work of a very small section of the working class (the truckers and auto junkies of Levittown) having rather precise needs dictating an assault on rising fuel prices, theirs turned out to be the most visible action against the gas shortage. But its archaic details mirrored important novelties in its targets (the state directly), breadth (continental), organizational form (uncentralized, flexible, unpredictable), technology (the extensive use of CBs to coordinate blockades and police confrontations), and generativeness (across age and occupational gaps).

At the very moment when capital lives or dies by the price of oil, those who were considered the most anti-revolutionary and bought off sectors of the working class became the most obstructive to capital (whatever the reasons in their heads). The truckers put their demands as pure income/work issues: they wanted to go faster (finish earlier), carry more and not pay for the gas hike. In this, however, they expressed the demands of most of the working class : they did not propose another plan for more work (as the alternativists have). They refused to provide a solution to the work crisis, and respect the demands of "general" capital and insisted on their particular interests. In this they appeared "backward"; but in the context of the present crisis any attempt to holdback preserves the work-crisis that capital so desperately needs to transcend.

VI. Where is the real anti-nuke movement?


The whole point of our analysis up to now is to drive a wedge between the alternativist ("pro-solar") and the anti-nuclear movements. Though historically they have developed together, the last few months have increasingly separated them out. The reason for the initial identification of these two movements has a simple "economic" determination. The alternativist movement understands that it was in its interest to make nuclear power more expensive so that "solar" costs would be more competitive. Hence, it has always "fought the nukes". At first they fought against "3 $\frac{1}{2}$ %" capital for in the 1960's up to the early 70's expensive nukes were not in the interest of this capital. But since 1973 "3 $\frac{1}{2}$ %" capital's strategy has definately changed. (Cf. "Introduction" and "Notes on the International Crisis" in Zero work 1.) The leap of oil, coal and uranium prices in 1973-75 made it clear that capital's mode of realizing its profit would take the energy instead of the "auto-industrial" sector as its basis in the U.S. Since then the interests of the alternativists and the "3 $\frac{1}{2}$ %" capitalists have increasingly coincided and in the recent months have all but become identical. That is, both are interested in higher energy prices though they compete on what forms of energy production will be developed.

The argument for nukes, shale-oil or coal gasification does not depend any longer upon the possibility of lower prices as a selling point. Carter's recent speeches on energy have taken the "millions for independence and not a penny for tribute to the Arabs" line. Presumably "we" are interested in buying freedom from shortages at any price. The only question asked is whether the money will go into shale, more oil drilling, alternative technology, coal gasification, nukes or whatever.

As a consequence of the shift in capital's strategy since 1973 and, more immediately, the price squeeze of 1979, capital-intensive industry and the alternativists have a common interest and a sphere of negotiation. The ground has been prepared for a kind of energy Magna Carta. For example, the alternativist movement can concede to the completion of, let's say, 50 or 60 plants under construction on condition that a certain level of investment goes to the "alternative technology" sector. Indeed, the recent interest in the electoral "solution" is a natura l


result of this new commonality. The Brown and Commoner campaigns can be seen in this light. For, after all, where better to make a deal except in the "smoke filled rooms" of electoral politics, even if the smoke is grown in Columbia instead of the Carolinas. The alternativist element of the movement, who believes the time is ripe to begin to actualize its envisioned form of production, will undoubtedly flock to these campaigns (under the banner of "realism" no doubt).

Where is, then, the real anti-nuclear movement? It must clearly be built out of those whose material interests cannot be negotiated with either the "3¹/₂%" capitalists or the alternativists. At this point there are two movements in this position: the anti-price-hike movement and the movement of nuclear workers (in the narrow and broad sense). The anti-price movement is directly anti-nuke simply because the strategy upon which nuclear development depends is based on the increased price of energy. Every victory of the anti-price movement undermines the expansion of the nuclear industry. The nuclear worker's movement is based upon the refusal of the work of absorbing radioactivity and it has two sections: those in the plants and those outside. The anti-price aspect is the money side while the other aspect is the work side. The real anti-nuke movement is the refusal of wasting your body and your life for radioactive capital.



The truckers and Levittown rioters are the most visible protagonists of the anti-price movement; the rest is subliminal and indirect because the energy price impact is "capillary" and is felt as just another consequence of "inflation". The anti-price struggle is ultimately a wage struggle. However, the problem of this struggle is that the wage is less and less determined at the locus of the job or state agency (e.g., the welfare office) but is increasingly a direct social quantity determined by the transformation of basic commodity prices. Hence the sense of a pervasive but almost invisible conflict throughout the post-1973 period in the U.S. In order to see this conflict a reclassification of working class action is necessary.

Consider bank robbery. At one time bank robbers were divided into the professionals for whom the heist was a kind of wage and the unemployed "amateur" who took the money as an alternative wage. But the explosion of bank robbers (33% increase in two years since 1970) in a period of dropping unemployment indicates that bank



robbery is increasingly a way of fighting inflation for those who have a wage (in one form or another) but whose wage is being attacked by the energy-price inflation. As Jay Dixon, security director for the Crocker National Bank, analyses the situation: "the bulk of bank robbers are not professionals; for one reason or another, it is someone who needs money..." (N.Y. Times, 8/25/79) Bank robbers increasingly lose their precise socio-economic categorization (no more being the "pro" or the "hard-luck loser") and merge once again, after a century and a half, with the working class as a whole, i.e., as "someone who needs money". (Cf. "Wages of Crime" a forthcoming Midnight Notes publication).

While the bank robber takes the money form directly as the target of the price struggle, other elements of the anti-price movement take the more traditionally defined wage form as the ground of battle. For example, the collapse of the Carter wage-price guidelines indicate that this terrain is still very dangerous territory for capital, perhaps permanently. The anti-price-hike movement has different strands that are far from connected and have many contradictions among them, but it forms a basic root of anti-nuclear behavior today. For the anti-price-hikers approach the energy/work crisis of capital not with an alternative way out but "merely" a "plan" for intensifying it. That is why, ^{un}doubtedly, they appear to the alternativists as "reactionaries" who must be educated. But what kind of education are they proposing? That radioactivity is dangerous? Every five year old child knows that. No, this education mania in the alternativist anti-nuke movement is really about re-educating the working class out of its struggle against work and for wages. They are to be taught that their interests are misguided, their needs are false and their desires are illusions, not that nuclear plants and wastes can kill.


The other root of anti-nuclear behavior lies in the nuclear workers' movement, which includes both those who work directly in the plants and fuel cycle and those living around the plants. Even the nuclear industry recognizes that living around the plant is work for it pays the bulk of the town taxes for local residents (which many consider a kind of wage). It is anxious, however, to "limit its liabilities" since, after all, a large portion of the population is immediately affected by

75

radioactive emissions (e.g., traces of radioactive iodine showed up in N.Y.C. milk after TMI). The focus of this movement is the work we do, more or less directly, for the nuclear industry. The essence of this work is most clearly seen in the case of nuclear workers proper like the "jumpers" who are paid \$100 for turning a single screw in two minutes in a highly radioactive area: their work is to have their bodies exposed to radiation for in this industry work appears in its pure form: not as physical effort, but as the destruction of the body.

The struggle of nuclear workers against their work inside the plants is shrouded by a thick security web of nuclear industry cops, F.B.I. and military agents, NRC and union bureaucrats. Thus, very little gets out. But the nuclear workers' subversion of the plants has its muffled echo in the increasingly elaborate security procedures and continuous anxiety concerning "human error" infecting the official guidelines and reports of the state and industry. We are told that TMI itself was due to "human error" and we know that on April 27, two nuclear workers, William E. Kuykendall and James A. Merrill, in the Surrey, Virginia nuclear plant carried a bucket of caustic sodium hydroxide past about 15 other workers into the fuel storage room and damaged about \$30,000,000 worth of rods. A month and a half later they held a press conference to charge that the plant was making illegal radioactive releases, had been poorly maintained and had violated technical specifications set by the NRC. This incident touched off another flurry of public nuclear soul searching with the NRC's Frank Gillespie saying: "What can you do?...It would be like your wife going and setting a fire in your house. It presents us with difficult questions. How many people do you need watching each other to be safe?" Clearly the "wives" of the industry are refusing the nuclear housework.

The nuclear worker movement is not confined inside the plants for increasingly the plants are becoming the targets of attacks from the outside. These attacks range from "local residents" demonstrating against the plants (e.g., at TMI), and refusing to provide water and other services (e.g., at Seabrook) to real or implied physical assault. For example, the General Accounting Office reported that 62 incidents occurred in the 21 months ending Sept. 30, 1976 "involving bomb threats, extortion attempts and actual security breaches." The assumption of the nuclear industry that if you locate a plant in a "conservative" rural



area, all will be well no matter what happens is wrong, as the aftermath of TMI shows. ~~Psychologists~~ Psychologists in the area say their caseloads for youngsters of preschool age increased 25% after the accident and a suit is being filed by some local farmers against Met Edison for the psychological damage done to their children (many of whom believe they will die in a decade). Months after the accident, Middletown "the once closely-knit community is now split over the merits and hazards of its nuclear neighbor, the division spilling over into heated debate across backyard fences and at borough meetings." (Philadelphia Bulletin, 7/8/79) The social "peace" the nuclear reactor depends upon and was meant to deepen had turned into a protracted guerilla warfare. TMI won't be over for decades.

The anti-price-hike and nuclear workers movements form the basis of a real anti-nuclear movement that will not, because it cannot, compromise with the development of nuclear capital.

The crisis of the anti-nuclear movement, as presently constituted, is whether it will continue to develop as the cutting edge of the activist movement or will separate from it. The tension within the anti-nuke movement this spring and summer does not come merely from the choice of prosolar tactics, but rather from the fact that many in the anti-nuclear movement are increasingly unable to follow the activist path. They are interested in closing the plants and not in an "activist future". This tension and division infects all the different strategies mentioned before (from the electoral to the direct action). Many of us simply can't afford the activist future. For this spring and summer have modified the "old" class composition of the anti-nuclear movement. The mostly precariously employed white intellectual workers increasingly feel the strain of unemployment, inflation (especially after the "counter-attack" on gasoline prices) and in their material perspectives are increasingly pushed to the present, away from "activist futures options".

What then could the real anti-nuclear movement be? A meeting point, perhaps, of the anti-price-hike and nuclear workers movement, a nexus of money and body politics. On the one side, the anti-nuclear movement could be a catalyst for anti-price-hike struggles, e.g., struggles against utility rate increases and fuel pass alongs which will undoubtedly increase this winter as the price of warmth will become impossible for many. On the other side, it could materially support nuclear workers in the plants in order to bring about a live option

for them (e.g., by supporting an immediate pension plan that would make it possible for plant workers to leave their jobs without hurting) and increase our resistance to all the nuclear work that ^{they} try to make us do. The problem for the anti-nuclear movement is not to provide a solution to the work/energy crisis but to intensify the refusal of the nuclear and "alternativist" future that capital will try to synthesize in its search for survival.

August 28, 1979

Midnight Notes

491 Pacific St.

Brooklyn, NY 11217

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